

Message Text

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71

ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 PM-04 DODE-00 CAB-02

CIAE-00 COME-00 DOTE-00 EB-07 INR-07 NSAE-00 CIEP-01

FAA-00 H-02 L-03 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 /087 W

----- 010886

R 161532Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6356

INFO AMEMBASSY COTONOU

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY LOME

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL CASABLANCA

AMCONSUL IBADAN

FAA BRUSSELS

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE LAGOS 9404

LONDON FOR RAY SEITZ AND AMBASSADOR EASUM

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CGEW, EAIR, CASC, PINS, NI

SUBJECT: CESSNA AIRCRAFT AND PILOTS DETAINED IN NIGERIA

REF: (A) LAGOS 9371 (B) STATE 201547

1. EXPLAINING THAT WE ACTING ON INSTRUCTIONS AS RESULT OF
CESSNA INQUIRY TO DEPARTMENT, EMBASSY APPROACHED MEA TODAY TO
ASK WHEN PLANES MIGHT BE PERMITTED TO CONTINUE FLIGHT TO KINSHASA.
WE TOLD MEA OF CESSNA CONCERN OVER THE PHYSICAL CONDITION OF THE
AIRCRAFT AND OF COMPANY'S DESIRE TO FERRY SEVERAL MORE AIRCRAFT
TO KINSHASA PER AGREEMENT WITH ZAIRIAN GOVERNMENT. MEA
OFFICIAL (DIRECTOR OF AFRICA DEPARTMENT) CONFIRMED THAT FRENCH,
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BRITISH AND ZAIRIANS HAD ALL MADE FORMAL REPRESENTATIONS AND

THAT FMG HAS NOT YET RESPONDED TO ANY OF THEM. OFFICIAL SAID NEITHER HIS OFFICE NOR MEA ACTUALLY HANDLING THE MATTER BUT DECLINED TO TELL US WHICH AGENCY OF FMG IS RUNNING WITH THE BALL. (COMMENT: THIS WOULD APPEAR TO CONFIRM OUR EARLIER ASSUMPTION THAT NIGERIAN SECURITY APPARATUS IN CHARGE. END COMMENT). DIRECTOR ADDED THAT HE HOPED "WITHIN NEXT FEW DAYS" THE "APPROPRIATE AUTHORITIES" WOULD HAVE "NEWS FOR ALL OF YOU."

2. CONSULAR OFFICER FROM BRITISH DEPUTY HIGH COMMISSION IN IBADAN TRAVELING TO BENIN CITY AUGUST 16 TO SEE PILOTS. EMBASSY HAS REQUESTED THROUGH HICOMM LAGOS THAT HE INQUIRE INTO CONDITION OF PLANES. BRITISH REPORT THAT NIGERIAN AUTHORITIES HAVE TURNED DOWN SUGGESTION (REF A) THAT PLANES BE FLOWN FROM UGHELLI TO PORT HARCOURT SO THAT THEY CAN BE PROPERLY MAINTAINED. SENIOR PILOT COBB (UK SUBJECT) HAS EXPRESSED SOME CONCERN THAT WATER CONDENSATION IN FUEL TANKS AND EXPOSURE TO ELEMENTS MAY MAKE PLANES UNSERVICEABLE.

3. EMBASSY AS YET UNABLE TO CONTACT ZAIRIAN AMBASSADOR WHO IS PERSONALLY HANDLING MATTER FOR GOZ, HIS FIRST SECRETARY HAVING DEPARTED FOR KINSHASA. WILL KEEP TRYING.

4. WILL REPORT RESULTS OF BRITISH FINDINGS WHEN AVAILABLE.
CAHILL

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: AIRCRAFT DETENTION, PILOTS, AIRCRAFT SALES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 16 AUG 1976
Decapton Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decapton Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ShawDG
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976LAGOS09404
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760314-0613
From: LAGOS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760851/aaaabrus.tel
Line Count: 85
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 LAGOS 9371, 76 STATE 201547
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ShawDG
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 08 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <08 APR 2004 by CunninFX>; APPROVED <04 AUG 2004 by ShawDG>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CESSNA AIRCRAFT AND PILOTS DETAINED IN NIGERIA
TAGS: EAIR, CASC, PINS, NI, CG, CESSNA
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006